

Message Text

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ACTION SIG-03

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P 111624Z SEP 78
FM AMCONSUL CASABLANCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5772

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FI CHANNEL

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ASIG
SUBJECT: POST MEMORANDUM: AMCONGEN CASABLANCA

REF STATE 211834

A. GENERAL

1. U.S. INTERESTS IN MOROCCO ARE DESCRIBED IN THE EMBASSY'S MEMORANDUM AND OTHER POLICY PAPERS. THIS CONSULATE GENERAL, BY VIRTUE OF ITS LOCATION IN MOROCCO'S LARGEST CITY, KEY PORT AND INDUSTRIAL/COMMERCIAL CENTER, ITS RELATIONS WITH PARLIAMENTARIANS, LABOR LEADERS AND OPPOSITION FIGURES BASED HERE AND ITS CONTACTS THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN MOROCCO IS WELL PLACED TO MAKE A SOLID CONTRIBUTION TO THE ADVANCEMENT/ PROTECTION OF THESE INTERESTS. TO THIS END THE POST'S EFFORTS ARE NOW CAREFULLY COORDINATED WITH THE MISSION'S TO PROVIDE FURTHER DEPTH AND COVERAGE TO THE LATTER'S WORK. SUCH COORDINATION IS A CONTINUING REQUIREMENT, HOWEVER, BASED ON A SHARED UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE MISSION AND THE CONSULATE OF THE EMBASSY'S EVOLVING NEEDS WHICH THIS CONSTITUENT POST IS TO MEET.

2. AT THIS WRITING MOROCCO REMAINS ENTANGLED WITH ITS NEIGHBORS OVER ITS CLAIMS TO SAHARAN TERRITORIES AND HAS ENTERED
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A PERIOD OF ECONOMIC BELT-TIGHTENING. AS RETRENCHMENT TAKES HOLD AND RELATED FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES (E.G. THE SAHARAN CONFLICT) CONFRONTING MOROCCO REMAIN UNRESOLVED OR GROW IN ACUITY, THE REACTIONS OF MOROCCO'S POLITICAL PARTIES -- BOTH PRO-GOVERNMENT AND OPPOSITION -- AS WELL AS ITS LABOR FEDERATIONS MANY OF WHICH REMAIN CENTERED IN CASABLANCA WILL REQUIRE PARTICULAR ATTENTION. GENERALLY CLOSER MONITORING

THROUGHOUT CASABLANCA'S CONSULAR DISTRICT IS LIKELY TO BECOME MORE IMPORTANT, THE MORE SO SINCE INTELLIGENCE CONCERNING SAHARAN DEVELOPMENTS CAN AND DOES OCCASIONALLY BECOME AVAILABLE IN THIS ADJACENT ZONE. THIS WILL HAVE TO BE ACCOMPLISHED DESPITE SENSITIVITIES FLOWING FROM DIVERGENCIES IN THE U.S. AND MOROCCAN GOVERNMENTS VIEWS ON THE CURRENT STATUS OF THE FORMER SPANISH SAHARA, WHICH HAVE BEEN THE SOURCE OF COMPLEXITIES AND STRAINS IN THE BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP FOR SOME TIME NOW. WHILE RETRENCHMENT LASTS, MOREOVER, WE SHALL HAVE TO WORK HARDER TO INCREASE U.S. TRADE WITH MOROCCO AND BE APPROPRIATELY SELECTIVE IN EVALUATING U.S. INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES HERE.

3. CASABLANCA HAS BEEN LIKENED TO NEW YORK IN THAT, AS DOES THE LATTER, IT MUST LIVE WITH POLICY DECISIONS AND REGULATIONS EVOLVED IN A SMALLER NEARBY CAPITAL WHERE, DESPITE THEIR PROPINQUITY, DECISION-MAKERS ARE SUBJECTED TO VERY DIFFERENT PRESSURES AND PRIORITIES. RABAT PROPOSES AND CASABLANCA DISPOSES, REACTING TO GOVERNMENT DICTA ON TRADE, INVESTMENT, ECONOMIC PRIORITIES AND FOREIGN POLICY FROM ITS OWN PERSPECTIVE, EXPERIENCE AND INTEREST. THIS CONGEN'S REPORTING MUST THUS PROVIDE THE MISSION WITH A LOCAL FLAVOR WHICH IS SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT OF NATIONAL RESPONSES TO EVENTS.

B. SPECIFICS

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1. A NEW FORMAT FOR ICA - CASABLANCA
ICA-CASABLANCA, WHICH HAS BEEN DORMANT FOR SEVERAL MONTHS THIS SUMMER, IS NOW TO BE REACTIVATED IN PROFOUNDLY MODIFIED FORM. ITS COMPLEMENT OF EXPERIENCED LOCAL EMPLOYEES IS TO BE SHARPLY CUT BACK, ITS DAR AMERICA PREMISES REDUCED, ITS CONNECTION WITH THE AMERICAN LANGUAGE CENTER TRANSFORMED OR POSSIBLY SEVERED AND ITS PROGRAMMING AND TARGET PRIORITIES ADJUSTED TO CONFORM TO NEW WASHINGTON GUIDELINES. TO HANDLE THIS CONSIDERABLE PROJECT EFFICIENTLY AND TO REBUILD ICA-CASABLANCA TO NEW LEVELS OF EFFECTIVENESS WHILE INTER ALIA PRESERVING CONTACT WITH GRANTEES RETURNING FROM THE U.S., STUDENT, YOUTH, WOMEN'S AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATIONS ETC., IS THE TASK AT HAND.

2. THE CASABLANCA TRADE FAIR

THE 28TH BIENNIAL CASABLANCA TRADE FAIR WILL BE HELD FROM APRIL 26 TO MAY 13, 1979. THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE ALLOCATES LIMITED RESOURCES TO THIS EVENT BECAUSE IT IS NOT A TRUE COMMERCIAL ENDEAVOR AND THEREFORE RANKS LOW AS A

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FI CHANNEL

VEHICLE FOR BOOSTING U.S. EXPORT SALES. MIXED MOROCCAN
- U.S. FIRMS HAVE IN THE PAST PARTICIPATED RATHER GRUDGINGLY,
NO DOUBT FOR SIMILAR REASONS. THE MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT,
ON THE OTHER HAND, CONSIDERS A SUBSTANTIAL U.S. PARTICIPATION
A BONA FIDE OF OUR INTEREST IN MOROCCO, PRESUMABLY THE MORE
SO SINCE THE 1978 UPSURGE IN MOROCCO'S FOREIGN RELATIONS
DIFFICULTIES AND THE CONCURRENT PHASING OUT OF RESIDUAL
U.S. MILITARY FACILITIES IN THIS COUNTRY. HENCE, THE CONSULATE
GENERAL, WITH EMBASSY ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT, WILL HAVE TO
MOUNT AN INTENSIVE CAMPAIGN IN THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY TO
"TOP OFF" COMMERCE'S LIMITED FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION AND
INSURE A SUCCESSFUL U.S. PARTICIPATION IN THE FAIR.

3.

THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

THE AMERICAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IS HEADQUARTERED IN CASA-
BLANCA. AFTER SEVERAL YEARS IN THE DOLDRUMS THE AMERICAN
CHAMBER HAS NOW BEGUN TO SHOW NEW SIGNS OF LIFE, LIKELY THE
RESULT OF THE DRIVE AND INITIATIVE OF A NEW PRESIDENT,
NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND THE PERSISTENT EFFORTS OF THE
EMBASSY AND CONSULATE GENERAL TO STIMULATE IT TO ACTION.
AN ACTIVE AMERICAN CHAMBER CAN DO MUCH TO HELP DEVELOP BI-
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LATERAL TRADE RELATIONS AND, IN PERIODS OF RECESSION, TO

PROTECT EXISTING COMMERCIAL LINKS FROM EROSION. THE CONSULATE GENERAL AND THE EMBASSY MUST CONTINUE EFFORTS ALREADY IN COURSE TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF THE CHAMBER AND TO INDUCE IT TO DO MORE IN THE LEAN YEARS AHEAD.

4. COMMUNICATION WITH THE HOME FRONT: PERSONAL MAIL

GOOD OR AT LEAST ADEQUATE PERSONAL MAIL SERVICE IS IMPORTANT TO MORALE. IT IS INADEQUATE IN CASABLANCA. INTERNATIONAL AIRMAIL IS UNCERTAIN AND EXPENSIVE; THE TRANSATLANTIC PHONE PROVIDES ONLY INTERMITTENTLY AN UNPREDICTABLE BUT COSTLY SUBSTITUTE. AIRPOUCH MAIL CAN TAKE WEEKS -- FOR REASONS WHICH REMAIN UNCLEAR -- SEA POUCH TAKES MONTHS. PARCELS CAN BE RECEIVED (IF THEY CONFORM TO WEIGHT AND SIZE LIMITATIONS) THROUGH THE POUCH BUT NOT SENT IN IT. AN IMPROVEMENT IN THIS SITUATION WOULD BE HIGHLY DESIRABLE AND EVERY EFFORT SHOULD BE MADE TO ACHIEVE IT.
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